

THE THREE SCOUTS.

BY J. T. TROWBRIDGE.
AUTHOR OF "CROOK'S CAVE," "NEIGHBOR JACKWOOD," &c.
[CONTINUED FROM SATURDAY'S TRIBUNE.]

II.—GOBBLED UP.

Old Joel's suspicions would certainly have been confirmed had he watched the progress of the stranger beyond the ridge. Reaching the turnpike, he turned southward, passed the picket guard, and, hastening on at a rapid pace, entered the Rebel lines before dark.

The sun set upon the city; upon the white tents of the patriot camps encircling it, stretching for miles over the sombre hills like a chain of snow-drifts; and upon the lonely sentinels of the distant outposts. Night came on. The soldiers in their canvas city slept; while far away mothers, sisters, wives, in their comfortable homes, dreamed of the loved ones here.

Did Fred's mother sleep that night? Did she dream of her darling boy resting upon the hard ground with those of the guard who rested, or watching with those who watched? Did she see him start from deep sleep late in the night, and, leaping up with his comrades, answer to his low-spoken name?

They are going to relieve the sentinels. The fires are out, and in silence and darkness they proceed along the shadowy side of the ridge. They mount toward its crest, in the direction of some dwarfish trees faintly defined against the dim sky. Suddenly a voice beyond challenges.

"Halt!" The party halts.

"Who goes there?"

"Relief," is the low response.

"Advance, sergeant, with the countersign."

The sergeant advances, and whispers the magic word in the ear of the challenge. The latter in turn whispers it in the ear of the soldier who relieves him. The new sentinels take their places; the old ones fall into the rear of the relieving party, as it marches on. Then all is silence again on the dark crest of the ridge.

Fred is stationed near some low cedar-trees that screen the pickets there from the enemy's observation. He is not alone; he has old Joel for a companion. There is no moon, and but few stars are visible. What a strange, silent, lonely night! Nobody knows how near the enemy is. He may be far away in those woods yonder; or he may be dangerously close,—within a few rods.

Fred moves continually about, examining the ground. "Didn't you hear nothing?" whispers old Joel. "A crackling noise down there in the hollow."

They listened; not a sound! Fred crouches low, in order to discern against the sky any object that may be moving near. He puts his ear to the ground. Footsteps! There is something approaching. Two or three forms are visible.

"Halt! Who goes there?"

"Patrol."

"Stand! Advance one with the countersign."

The countersign is right. The patrol asks a few questions, and moves on. Again silence.

"There'll be an attack along the line here, somewhere, about daylight," prognosticates old Joel.

"There always is after one of them spies has been around."

"Do you mean that Union man Cy brought in? He was no spy," says Fred.

"Bet my naps on that. He's in the Rebel camp, long 'fore this. I believe Southern Union men are a humbug, genl; and the whole pass system is wus'n the dense. I wouldn't grant one of 'em chaps a pass to go where they please, any more'n I'd— Was that noise any thing?"

"Only the wind it is raising a little."

"By this time there's something 'a' goin'!"

"Challenge it," says Fred.

Joel challenges. No response. He is about to fire, when Fred, who can scarce restrain his laughter, stops him.

"It's nothing but a bough waving in the wind!"

"So I thought, when I challenged it," says the old man; "but it's always well to be sure."

Slowly the moments drag. The stars grow dim. The dawn is not far off. What thoughts come to the boy soldier as he watches there!—his mother, who loves him, and whose life would be left so desolate if any accident should happen to him; the deadly, terrible war; and when, when, will it ever end? the strange sense of loneliness and mystery that fills him as he listens, and looks up at the far, dim stars; and, besting under all, a wild place of ambition, as he thinks of the glory which may be won.

Hark! what is that? Surely a sound of hoofs, distant, moving slowly as with cautious approach.

"Jake!" whispers Fred; "a troop of horse!"

"It's only our videttes," says Jake, languidly. "You and old Joel are always seeing bug-bears."

A small stream flows through a ravine in front of the picket line. Beyond that the ground is broken and partially wooded. Ridge and hollow are beginning to appear faintly defined in the early December twilight. Fred strains his eyes, gazing to catch the first indication of a movement in that direction. Suddenly, crack!—crack! The enemy has been discovered by pickets further down, and been fired upon.

The reports are a signal of alarm to the outpost. They also serve as a signal to the enemy that heavy, prodding is perceived. Instantly the muffled sound of hoofs breaks into a clatter, a clatter—a galloping headlong race over the hillside, down the slopes—crash, splash, through the thickets! plash, plash, into the water! and crack, crack, flash, flash, all along the line of pickets!

"Told yez so!" cried old Joel. "I said there'd be an attack."

"Nothing but a little cavalry dash!" says Jake, alert.

"Don't ye run!" (Jake is decidedly adverse to running.)

"I don't believe there's going to be much of a show!"

"They have dashed into our boys below!" cries Fred.

"Fall back, or we shall be cut off."

"Don't ye run, I tell ye!" reiterates Jake. "The boys down there I look out for themselves. It's only a little squad of guerrillas—standoff boys, and we'll capture the whole caboodle of 'em!"

The firing is rapid but irregular. Pistol shots mingle with rifle-shots. Then the clash of sabres—shrieks, shouts, yells. The pickets fall back upon their guard—Jake and his companions with the rest, but more slowly than some of the others; for suddenly the Rebel cavalry are upon them. Having dashed into the line, and captured a few prisoners, they wheel, and make a sweep to take in what stragglers they can. Here they come, a swift, tumultuous troop, yelling, with sabres in air.

"Rally by fours!" shouts Jake.

There is an attempt to rally; but it is useless. What can a few scattered boys do against such an impetuous charge of cavalry?

"Quar!" cries old Joel, throwing down his musket, and throwing up his hands.

"Blame the luck!" growls Jake, following the dearest example.

Fred does the same; but he has fired first, emptying his saddle.

They have yielded just in time. The Rebels surround

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IMPORTANT FROM NORTH CAROLINA

A Battle Reported Near Kinston on Wednesday last.

A VICTORY CLAIMED OVER OUR FORCES.

The Gallantry of the Union Troops Acknowledged.

REPORTS OF SCOUTS.

Runover Union Victories in South Carolina.

CHEATHAM AND JOHNSTON GET "AWFULLY WHIPPED."

GENERAL SHERMAN AT CHERAW.

WASHINGTON, March 12, 1865.

The Richmond Examiner of Friday contains the following dispatch from Gen. Lee, giving the particulars of a battle near Kinston, North Carolina, between Gen. Bragg of the Confederate army, and the Union forces, which moved from Newbern to meet Sherman in the direction of Goldsborough:

HEADQUARTERS, etc., March 9, 1865.
HON. J. C. FULTON, Secretary of War, Gen. Bragg reports that he attacked the enemy yesterday, four miles in front of Kinston, and drove him from his position. He disputed the ground obstinately, and took up a new line three miles from his first. We captured three pieces of artillery and 1,500 prisoners. The sum of about three miles from Fayetteville. I have ordered a similar number of prisoners in our hands to be disposed of in like manner.

I hold about one thousand prisoners captured in various ways, and am now at Kinston, and I have ordered a similar number of prisoners in our hands to be disposed of in like manner.

Kinston, near which the fight occurred, is situated on the direct route from Goldsborough to Newbern, and is about twenty miles east of Goldsborough and about thirty from Newbern.

It is supposed that this force of the enemy was advancing from Newbern against Goldsborough for the purpose of cutting the railroad at that point. It is not probable, after this report, that the enemy will attempt to advance, and it is likely we shall next hear of their falling back on Newbern, or changing their course to some other point of the compass. This movement of the enemy was evidently designed to be cooperative with Sherman, and in this light, and in this juncture, it may be of great value to us in embarrassing the movements of Sherman.

Gen. Sherman Across the Great Pines, and between Hardee and Beauregard—A Battle—Theatricals—Taking the Oath—Trade, &c.
From Our Special Correspondent.

WILMINGTON, N. C., March 7, 1865.

Advices deemed trustworthy, have been received here from Gen. Sherman, confirming reports which reached us several days since, to the effect that his main army passed into North Carolina at least four days ago. His route lay through Cheraw, S. C. The Rebel forces of Gen. Hardee are reported to be lying on the two sides of the Pines, which river, Gen. Sherman has successfully crossed, placing himself between Hardee and Beauregard. The direction taken by the Union army since entering North Carolina it would be contraband to mention. What may have occurred during the last day or two, or whether there has been any meeting of the two armies, is not positively known here, though it is not expected that any general battle can occur for some time to come.

Quartermaster's goods, greatly needed by the sick, have come to hand, such as blankets and clothing; still there is great need of spirits and under clothing. Where are the Sanitary supplies?

BENEFIT FOR THE PRISONERS.

The managers of the Wilmington Theater gave a benefit on Saturday evening to the returned prisoners. The house was thronged in every part at one dollar for admission, and yesterday the Medical Director of Gen. Sherman's Department, Dr. J. M. Shippen, acknowledged the receipt from Mr. F. C. Jones, the acting manager, of the generous sum of \$1,074, as the proceeds of the evening's entertainment. Dr. Shippen compliments the manager and whole company for their timely and most patriotic action. Miss Elsie Bridges, a favorite actress of this and other Southern theaters for two or three years, was the chief attraction of the evening, and contributed greatly to swell the generous donation to the poor soldiers. She has, during the brief period of the occupation of Wilmington, won a lasting place in the esteem of the Union officers and men who have visited her fine performances.

TAKING THE OATH.

About a thousand persons have already taken the oath of allegiance, and the office of Col. Randall, the Provost-Marshal, is thronged from morning till night with candidates pressing eagerly forward to be the first to declare their renewed fealty to the old flag and government. The stores, under permits granted by Gen. Hawley, are gradually opening to close out the stocks on hand. These are generally small, the larger part of the goods having been removed to places in the interior, or concealed upon the approach of the Union army. Col. —, the agent of the Treasury Department, is here, and will look after the cotton, resin and turpentine belonging of right to the Government; and attend generally to the establishment and regulation of trade.

Several strange steamers have appeared here during the day, among the rest the new and elegant steamer Edward Everett, lately built for the Government by Edward Everett of East Boston.

One of the naval gunboats to day went up the Cape Fear River. She will probably explore the river for some distance and clean out any Rebels that may be found along the route. If possible she will bring down one of the blockade-runners which may have taken refuge up the river.

Weather mild and Spring-like, with indications of rain. The day of the troops good.

Report of one of Gen. Thomas's Scouts.

From The Washington Republican, March 10.

Major-Gen. Thomas telegraphs the Government from the South-West that one of his scouts has come in with information that the Rebel Generals Lee and Cheatham, with their forces, had been sent from Alabama against Sherman, but that Lee was subsequently recalled to defend Selma, Ala., which, it was supposed, would be attacked by the Union forces.

Cheatham was ordered to proceed, and after burning

a junction with Hardee, who came up from Charleston, to attack Sherman.

The reports report that the Rebels have information that before the junction was formed Sherman hurled a few of his veteran brigades back upon Cheatham's column, and completely crushed it.

Hardee was not up in time, and reports do not say that he gave battle at all, but that Johnston was supposed to have attacked Sherman in front and got awfully whipped.

There is every reason to believe the report to be true, notwithstanding the roundabout way through which it comes.

The name of the place where the reported battle occurred is not mentioned, but it was probably somewhere on the line of the States of South and North Carolina.

Desertions from the Rebel Army.

NEWBERN, N. C., Feb. 29, 1865.

Yesterday Company B of the 6th North Carolina Confederate Cavalry, which was raised in the western part of the State, came into our lines in a body, with their two Lieutenants, their horses and equipments, numbering over sixty men, and delivered themselves up to our commanding officers at Camp Palmer.

After partaking of a bountiful feast at Camp Palmer, they, with the old flag at the head of their column, entered the city, the hospitalities of which they are now enjoying.

When they were informed that they would receive pay for their horses and arms and be furnished employment or allowed to go North, they remarked that if it was generally known in the South that such a reception awaited the Confederate soldiers in our lines that the entire Army of the Confederacy would follow their example.

The arrival of the remainder of this regiment into our lines is daily looked for.

They say that Kinston is being evacuated, and that the South Carolina troops are the first to give up and acknowledge that the South is whipped.

Sherman Retaining for the Murder of His Forgers.

CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN HIM AND THE REBEL GEN. WADE HAMPTON.

REBELS, MILITARY DIVISION OF THE MISSISSIPPI, &c.

IN THE FIELD, Feb. 24, 1865.

Lieut. GEN. WADE HAMPTON, Commanding Cavalry Corps, C. S. A.

GENERAL: It is officially reported to me that your foraging parties are murdered after capture, and labeled "Death to all foragers." One instance of a lieutenant and seven men, near Chesterfield, and another of twenty, "near a ravine, clearly from the main force," about three miles from Fayetteville. I have ordered a similar number of prisoners in our hands to be disposed of in like manner.

I hold about one thousand prisoners captured in various ways, and am now at Kinston, and I have ordered a similar number of prisoners in our hands to be disposed of in like manner.

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LATE REBEL NEWS.

We have full files of Richmond papers to the 9th inst. (Thursday last), and make the following extracts. Such of them as are without date are from Thursday's issues:

War News.

A GREAT WAR MEETING AT TALADEGA, FLA.

From The Whig: TALADEGA, Feb. 26, via CHARLOTTE, N. C., March 7.—A great war meeting was held here to-day—the masses are rising. This morning the Hon. A. W. Hall addressed the audience in the church for a space of three and a half hours, which called forth the widest enthusiasm on the part of the people. The audience was dismissed until 3 p. m., when they were addressed in a speech of two and a half hours by Capt. Bard, with great effect. The result of these efforts is that the people are now united and will prosecute the war vigorously.

The whole matter concluded with a grand national air by the ladies.

AN EARLY ATTACK ON MOBILE THREATENED.

From The Same: via CHARLOTTE, N. C., March 7.—Twenty-two steamers and six Mississippi River transports are in the Lower Bay, and a large number of troops are reported on Dauphin Island and Pensacola, indicating an early attack on this city.

Adjournment of the Confederate Congress.

In the Rebel Senate on the 8th the following action was taken on the question of adjournment: Mr. Maxwell of Florida moved to take up House resolution fixing Wednesday, the 8th inst., at 12 o'clock, as the time of the adjournment of Congress.

Mr. Maxwell moved to amend by striking out "Wednesday, the 8th inst.," and inserting "Thursday next."

Mr. Graham moved to insert Saturday next, at 2 o'clock, p. m. Agreed to.

The resolution was then amended by inserting the words "since die."

Mr. Vest spoke against the resolution. He thought the adjournment of Congress at this time would have a disastrous effect. When the contest might be said to be narrowed down to the possession of the Confederate capital, when the President stood in need of the counsel of every wise man in the country, to say the least of it, if the two Houses of Congress were adjourned, it would be a great calamity to the country.

Mr. Burnett spoke for himself alone in saying that he did not believe that Congress should adjourn in this crisis of the country. Without going into particulars he would say that exigencies might arise any day which would require the presence of the Senate. Senators would undertake him.

Mr. Johnston said that for some days past a gloom had pervaded the public mind, and he attributed it in a great measure to improper remarks made by his first revolutionary struggle.

Mr. Johnston then gave his opinion in opposition to everything looking toward reconstruction, and expressed his views upon what should be the course of the Government. He hoped the resolution would not prevail, and that every man would stand by the bill which would be so modified.

Mr. Wigfall also opposed the resolution. Congress should stand by the ship, and let its fate be theirs. He believed the adjournment of Congress would be a misfortune little less serious than the loss of a battle.

Mr. Johnston said that he did not understand all this talk about the adjournment of Congress producing a panic, and he did not believe it. He did not believe that the army of the country, led to Congress to save them. It was the business of Congress to save them.

The resolution was passed by the following vote: Ayes—Messrs. Brown, Graham, Johnston, Georgia, Maxwell, O'Leary, Orr, Semmes, Walker and Watson—10.

NAYS—Messrs. Burnett, Caperton, Henry, Hunter, Johnston, Semmes, Brown, Johnston, Walker and Wigfall—10.

Mr. Vest said he desired to submit in writing and have it spread upon the record, the protest of himself and colleagues against the adjournment of Congress in this crisis of the country.

The Slave-Arming Question—Interesting Debate in the Confederate Senate—The Bill at Last Passed.

We extract from the proceedings of the Senate on Tuesday, the 8th inst., the following: The House bill to increase the military forces of the Confederate States, better known as the Negro Soldier bill, was taken up and read. The following is the bill:

A bill to increase the military forces of the Confederate States.

"The Congress of the Confederate States of America do enact, That in order to provide additional troops for the defense of the Confederate States, and to preserve their institutions, the President be and he is hereby authorized to ask for, and he is hereby authorized to accept, of the President, a bill to increase the military forces of the Confederate States, better known as the Negro Soldier bill, was taken up and read. The following is the bill:

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in California would be to put his name to such a measure as this unless obliged to do so by a restriction. As long as he was free to vote from his own convictions nothing could have extorted it from him.

Mr. Hunter then argued the necessity of freeing the negroes in the most heart and head that tells us it must be so; when they came out from this conflict they must be free. If we could make them soldiers, the condition of the soldier being socially equal to any other in society, we could make them officers, perhaps, to command white men. Some future ambitious President might use the slaves to strike the liberties of the country and put the white men under his feet. The Government had no power under the Constitution to arm and emancipate the slaves, and the Constitution granted no such great powers by implication.

Mr. Hunter then showed from statistics that no considerable body of negro troops could be raised in the States over which the Government had control, without stripping the country of its negro population, and that the negroes would be left in a state of destitution and poverty. He thought there was a much better chance of getting the large number of